

# CABLE AND COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Committee Attendance:** James Berard, Kernan Chaisson, Nathan Finkelstein, Grant Moy and Suzanne Weiss. **Cable Office Staff:** Andrea Gardner, and Margie Williams. **Guest/s:** Clifford Royalty and Joshua Bokee (Comcast)

| <b>Topic</b>     | <b>Discussion</b>  | <b>Response/Action</b>  |
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| 1. Introduction  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting began at 7:00 p.m.</li> </ul>   |   |
| 2. Minutes       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>February 28<sup>th</sup> minutes reviewed.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes approved.</li> </ul>   |
| 3. Cliff Royalty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cliff introduced himself and told the committee that he is at their disposal if they ever needed clarity on any issue. Cliff reminded the group that as an advisory committee they have the ability to make recommendations to both the County Council and to the Office of the County Executive. He also responded to questions from various committee members.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant asked when can press releases be issued and how could one be brought about? The idea is to bring public attention to this.</li> <li>Could our meeting be recorded as a supplement to the minutes?</li> <li>Suzanne questioned the internet access standards (Consumer Protection Standards) recent approval through MFP and its effects on the Cable Office.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claude asked if the County could make a recommendation to the FCC based on recent experiences. Claude stated there is a disconnect regarding the issue of closed captioning. Though he recognizes the Cable Office in their efforts to find creative ways to force the cable providers to give closed captioning importance is limited because of the franchise agreement. He also asked since the cable office is unable to help, could the county assist with making the cable providers comply. Joy added that Congress would not do anything unless the FCC has had an opportunity to deal with the complaint.</li> <li>How can the committee be more effective as it relates to               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The brochure</li> <li>The issue of closed captioning</li> <li>Press Release</li> </ol> </li> </ul> | <p><b>Responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Press releases are issued out of the Office of Public Information and the committee could make recommendations to the County Executive and the County Council.</li> <li>Our meetings could be recorded providing that an announcement is made prior to the actual recording that it is being recorded, and only for a purpose of minutes.</li> <li>Cliff gave some background and a short review.</li> <li>Regarding the issue of closed captioning, the County Attorney does not have control over the cable office but potentially there is some generic provision in the franchise agreement. The FCC (Federal Communications Commission) has jurisdiction over closed captioning and they can act on it once a complaint has been filed. He further stated a complaint could not be filed by the committee but by the county.</li> <li>Cliff responded the committee could make recommendations to the County Council and the County Executive regarding these three topics.</li> </ul> |

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| Cliff Royalty continued | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was suggested that committee members get Cliff's email address. Nat made the point that committee members should not be contacting Cliff directly instead channel questions and request for information through the Chairman.</li> <li>• Kernan thanked Cliff for attending the meeting and responding to the committee's questions.</li> </ul>   |  |
| 4. Joshua Bokee         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joshua Bokee introduced himself as the Director of Public Affairs for Comcast and returned with answers to previously asked questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trish previously asked if Comcast is planning any type of awareness to educate the public on the digital phone service they are currently being offered? Kernan inquired as to how the 911 feature works. In addition, Kernan asked how Comcast plan to handle the digital phone service in the event of a power outage lasting more than 48 hours and its effects on the 911 service and the battery life.</li> <li>• Question raised "what if the billing address is different that the location of the equipment?"</li> <li>• Suzanne asked what Comcast has done to remedy/address the fine they were given for the last two quarters regarding customer service issues. What steps have been taken to remedy the complaints regarding the customer service issues since Comcast has been fined. Claude responded to the comment on the job fair and stated that he hoped Josh encouraged Comcast management to look for employees at universities such as Galludet. The hiring of deaf employees would increase awareness of closed captioning.</li> <li>• Claude inquired about Comcast response to closed captioning and voiced concerns that the committee would like to see Comcast commit to ensure captioning for the large viewing audience who greatly depend on this service in the county. He also spoke of his disappointment that the responsibility of close captioning is not placed on the producers. Suzanne suggested committee provide Josh with some instances where closed captioning has been and issue and get a response from him as to why.</li> <li>• Suzanne asked what kind of customers is Comcast looking for and what is being done to keep the existing customers and to attract new customers.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Responses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josh responded the E911 is 911 enhanced. All Comcast phones are equipped with a EMTA Modem. All units come with battery back up power. If cable has been disrupted or a pole knocked down the power will go out. Public education for this service and answers for these questions can be found on the Comcast Website.</li> <li>• Josh will check into this and return with an answer.</li> <li>• Comcast takes the issue of customer service very serious and utilizes quality assurance to help assess our work in that area. We have hired several front line positions at a recently held job fair.</li> <li>• Josh responded that Comcast focuses on making sure that captioning is provided.</li> <li>• Josh responded that the decision ultimately lies with the consumer and their comparison of the various packages.</li> </ul> |

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| 4. Committee Reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now that the committee is aware that Comcast is being fined for a third consecutive time, could a letter be sent from the Cable office to the county executive? Grant suggested the fastest way to accomplish this to make a motion for a formal recommendation to the Cable Office through the Public Information Office issue a press release stating Comcast was fined for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive quarter in total the amount of \$24, 563.00. RCN should also include RCN's construction violations.</li> <li>• Grant to send updated brochure information.</li> <li>• Suzanne to draft letter to the County Council for MFP in support of the cable office regarding the budget.</li> <li>• The cable office will put through the request for recommendation on the press release.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOTION: Formal recommendation made to the Cable Office to request the Public Information Office to ask that a press release be issued stating that Comcast had been fined for violations for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive quarter <u>as soon as possible</u>. The press release should also include RCN's construction violations.</li> <li>• Letters sent to each Council member with presentation prior to the 4/26 MFP meeting.</li> </ul> |
| 5. Adjournment       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cable office presented Claude with a certificate of appreciation for his contribution to the CCAC. Claude thanked the group and offered to assist with his support with the issue of closed captioning.</li> <li>• Verizon will be in attendance at next month's meeting.</li> <li>• Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Division of Technology Conference Room #114 (1<sup>st</sup> Floor).</li> </ul>  |

Submitted by: Andrea Gardner, Office Services Coordinator